

COVID-19 Pandemic and Counter Insurgency (COIN)

Operations in the Northeast of Nigeria¹

Imperative of Technology

Aishatu Morido Yanet², Ugwumba Egbuta³, Oluwatumis Taiwo Paimo⁴

Abstract:

Boko Haram insurgency brings with it unprecedented consequences, particularly in records of multiple deaths and devastating effects on socio-economic dynamics of the nation. Since no state would stay without responding to threats to its national security, the federal government of Nigeria adopted both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches to counter the impact of terrorism on its shores. With several attacks from Boko Haram and the resultant consequences in terms of deaths, displacement and economic damages, the group has remained a potent force particularly in the Northeast and the Sahel region. In the midst of these contending realities is the Corona Virus Disease (COVID -19) that broke out from Wuhan, China in December 2019. Within the space of few months, the outbreak spiralled into a public health emergency and global pandemic; with rapid spread, high casualty rate and negative impacts on global health and economy. Accordingly, Nigeria like other nations was hit by the virus, causing disruption in its already fragile economy coupled with internal security threats. As a measure of containment, the global lockdown measures resulted in less economic patronage which translated into vulnerabilities like crime rate increase. While other countries were seeking answers to the question of health security, Nigeria was faced with the double tragedy of Boko Haram on one hand; and health insecurity on the other with attendant consequences. In this view, application of technology in combating insecurity as well as health emergencies will be the way to go, particularly, in a world that is technologically driven. This paper examines the imperative of technology in counter insurgency operations. It will adopt the historical approach in its analysis to build a pragmatic approach to reversing the trend.

Keywords:

COVID-19; Boko Haram; insurgency; Counter Insurgency Operation; health insecurity.

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² Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria.

³ Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College, Abuja, Nigeria; ubegbuta@yahoo.com

⁴ Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria.



Introduction

In an already fragile socio-economic order; the global pandemic caused by the outbreak of Covid-19 poses as a multiplier effect to the security challenge occasioned by Boko Haram terrorism in Nigeria. Boko Haram has grown in sophistication in terms of the use of terror as a means to an end; it continues to gain prominence in the global terrorism ranking. Its transformation from an initial pacifist movement to a terror group with regional spread has questioned the invulnerability of state actors and their rights to the monopoly of the use of force (Wassel, 2012). With the increased rate in kidnappings, rapes, abduction, assassination, suicide bombing, calculated and strategic attacks by the Boko Haram terrorist group; and the global spread of Covid-19 pandemic, the sect grew in strength and used every opportunity at its disposal to instill more fear and terror on the state (Ossai, 2021; Iweze, 2020).

Nigeria, in recent times has become a hub of insecurity. There is currently an internal security operation in almost all the thirty-six states of the federation. Prominent in all the security challenges, is the Boko Haram induced crisis in the North East which has compounded the issues of displacements, poverty, inequality, infrastructural collapse including health facilities (Brookings Event, 2020). This has implications for the management of the Covid – 19 pandemic. With diverse view on the root causes of Boko Haram, it's continuous violence has resulted in an emergency humanitarian response. This does not only have effects on the survival of the state; but also on the citizenry (Mercy, Corps, 2020). Such precarious situation could be compounded in an event of a full-blown pandemic. Ossai (2021), Iweze (2020) opined that as distinctive level of cooperation and consultation between individuals and groups on immediate health response to Covid – 19 pandemic gains attention, counter-insurgency operations in the North East records low patronage and ineffectiveness, in terms of commitment by government, resulting in less success.

Rather than over-reliance on physical deployment for counter-insurgency operation (putting boots on the ground) to the region, technology could be leveraged upon using 4th industrial revolution (4IR). This is about the deployment of drones, Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAV), and ICT facilities to prosecute the war, since physical contact of people have proven to be effective in spreading Covid- 19. As it is in the changing world of globalization, the effectiveness of security architecture now depends on strong security governance system; constituted by defence mandate, security and intelligence institutions, thereby denying space for dominance of continued threat (Bala, 2020). The imperative for counter-insurgency operations; communication, coordination and cooperation that involves, intelligence and operational measures from security agencies of the nation should be further explored.

The quick response of the Federal Government of Nigeria in containing the spread of Covid-19 corresponds with the existential threat of Boko Haram insurgency in the Northeast. The double tragedy of combating the Boko Haram terrorism on one hand, and the Covid-19 pandemic leaves much to be desired on the effectiveness and efficiency of the agencies responsible in countering such threats to deliver (Owonikoko, 2021). Given the consideration

for the application of the securitization theory as a framework of analysis for this study, this paper reveals the importance of emergency response to existential threats. In this light, it investigates the imperatives of technology in such containment strategies. The implication here is that technology serves as a good alternative to effective counter insurgency operations; most especially in the realities of the double-faced health and human insecurity quagmire. The paper utilises secondary method of data collection, to source and provide information that will add to the discourse on the importance of technology in the management of Covid-19 and counter-insurgency operations in Nigeria.

Conceptual Clarification

The two concepts in this paper Covid-19 and Counterinsurgency operations (COIN) will be conceptualised and operationalized for clarity and understanding.

COVID-19, derived from the word coronavirus disease 2019 is caused by the novel severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). It belongs to a group of virus of the family of coronaviridae, which are zoonotic. Covid-19 sometimes causes mild disease or severe disease like (MERS) Middle East Respiratory Syndrome or (SARS) Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (WHO, 2020). The virus was declared a pandemic due to its rapid spread and casualty rate, it originated from Wuhan, a city in China, in late 2019. The first case of the virus in Nigeria was confirmed by the Federal Ministry of Health on 28 February, 2020 (FMOH, 2020). With palpable fear, due to its contagious nature, there was heightened insecurity for all; most especially workers who have daily routines that involves interactions. The effect on human existence and sustenance since it was first confirmed in Nigeria raised concerns and fear among the populace (Osah and Adewunmi, 2020).

The United Nations (2020) in its emergency response to the wide spread pandemic identified that the virus has taken hundreds of thousands of lives, infected millions and crumbled the global economy; thereby creating a bleak future for the existing and coming generations. The organization, through its agency, the World Health Organisation (WHO) has been rendering medical and humanitarian support to nations, particularly, the vulnerable groups. Providing logistics, common services and operational supports to all governments and its partners, it ensures that the crisis is attended to at the barest minimum. Much more than health crisis; security crisis, humanitarian crisis and human right crisis have become a major challenge to the world in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The SARS-CoV-2 infection can be asymptomatic and also has a wide spectrum of symptoms. It has left an impact on every generation including those yet to be born (United Nations, 2020). Accordingly, Wiersingia et al (2020) posits that the wide spread of Covid-19 infection has significantly increased hospitalizations of persons with pneumonia. As at July 1, 2020 it has affected almost all countries of the world and resulted in more than 10 million identified cases.



Coronavirus is identified to be large, enveloped and single handed; having RNA that can be found in humans and other mammals (Wiersingia et al, 2020).

Although there are a number of vaccines approved by the WHO and currently being administered on citizens, the Nigeria Centre for Disease Control (CDC, 2020) explains that Covid-19 has no specific treatment; but medical help can be sought to reduce the symptoms. The vaccines such as ... are basically build to help build human immune system to be able to respond against covid infections and symptoms. The virus spreads from person to person and recent data shows that even those that have fully vaccinated are still exposed to contacting the virus, though at a very minimal rate compare to the unvaccinated people. As the virus spreads from respiratory droplets, from touching surfaces or having contacts with an infected person; measures of containing its spread is being adopted. Social distancing, using nose masks, constant application of alcohol based sanitizers is advised to curb its spread.

Counter-insurgency Operations

Counter-insurgency operations are operations aimed at neutralizing the incursion of adversaries and prevent them from destabilizing the established governance structures. It follows the use of both kinetic and non-kinetic approaches in containing the threats. When it is heavily kinetic, it then becomes an action commonly engaged by skilled security personnel to rebuild an affected state through operations that counters the threats of the adversaries. (Charbonneau, 2021). COIN Operations; is a complex subset of warfare. It is an activity that involves the whole of society in an attempt to defeat insurgency (Field Manual Interim, 2009). This implies that as no state can be an island of its own; no counter-insurgency operation can be engaged in the absence of some specialized agencies. All parties to a constituted government must be effectively and efficiently engaged for successful operations. It is a process involving different activities by a legitimate government, where training to understudy the strength and limitations of all parties involved in the designated activity is important.

Notably, the action is a tactical effort, unique and innovative to guarantee successful operation against an existential threat(s). As successful operation becomes the goal of a proposed action, the environment and methods of planning, and executing such counter-insurgency operations are germane.

Similarly, the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO, 2017) expanded the scope. It sees counter-insurgency operation as a comprehensive civilian and military effort, which is underlined by coordination and cooperation by different groups to defeat insurgents; while at the same time addressing its core grievances. Such operation is usually a long term activity to provide security for targeted population and change the behavior of the adversaries. It seeks to unravel the primary sources of unrest, determine and address the levels of dissatisfaction by the aggrieved group in an attempt to ensure lasting peace and security.

If insurgency is not curbed from the grassroots, it can lead to other forms of internal conflicts and crises. At the same time, the inability to maintain national security by a legitimate government brews continuous use of force by the insurgent group, thereby demeaning the capacity and legitimacy of the government (NATO, 2017). Similarly, Field Manual Interim describes insurgency as an organized movement that targets a constituted government, by subverting its leadership through violent methods, in order to achieve its inherent political goal(s). It is an internal struggle, emanating within a defined geopolitical space of a territory. This present the end goal of insurgency which is to dismantle existing political structure and take and possibly take over the governance of a particular political setting.

Metz and Millen in another view argue that counter-insurgency in the twenty-first century has become a dominant activity for states in the maintenance of peace and security. This is in support of the assertion that the dynamics of conflict and warfare in the 21st century has significantly changed, with more of asymmetric conflicts than inter-state. To respond to threats posed by insurgents, governments resort to mounting counter-insurgency operations that require specialized skills and training. Therefore, counter-insurgency operation encompasses effective local security, good intelligence, capacity and capability enhancement and development at all levels and with regional or international military partnership and cooperation.

Methodology

In order to attain the objectives, set out in this study, data collection and analysis followed a defined procedure. Thus, this section provides a description of this methodological approach. The data used in this study were derived largely from secondary materials such as published books on the broad theme of the research, journal articles, conference proceedings, government publications and internet resources. Data generated from these sources were analyzed qualitatively. The paper is limited to the challenges posed by terrorism in a period of health insecurity, while establishing a nexus between human and physical security.

Theoretical Framework

The paper is situated within the framework of securitization theory as a basis for analysis. Ole Waever popularized the theory. It sees security as a speech act. That is, the exact use of the word security makes it an urgent situation that requires immediate action or response. A security actor that specializes in the identification of a threat(s), takes an extraordinary measure to ensure survival. That is normal procedural politics can be substituted for an emergency political reaction. The very fact that it is a security issue creates a change from the democratic rules and regulations, to engage emergency responses that may hinder the free observation of the human rights of those involved (Taureck, 2006).



To avoid every other national concern(s) from becoming a security issue, the identified threat(s) must be successfully contained. Therefore, to label a situation a security threat which requires spontaneous response; must fulfill the criteria of identification of the source of the threat by a legitimate actor. An emergency action to contain the threat must be engaged; and there must be observable effects of the identified threat(s) on persons, units or state. Fulfilling these three criteria gives opportunity to break free from the already stated or guiding rules and regulations in a particular entity (Buzan et al, 1998).

Since the first criteria to a security concern is a securitization move, by a legitimate actor, who has social and political power and capability; then Boko Haram insurgency and the Covid-19 pandemic becomes an existential threat that requires emergency political decision to contain. Identifying these threats as a national threat concern which has the capability to threaten the survival of Nigeria and Nigerians makes it necessary for the state to respond appropriately by mounting a counter operation to end the threat and its negative impact. In this regard, the federal government is deploying a whole of society approach by applying both kinetic and non-kinetic means to counter the Boko Haram incursion in the north east Nigeria. Similarly, the Covid-19 health emergency constitute a serious threat to Nigeria and the global community. While the government is deploying humanitarian mission to support its citizens, security intervention was also required to curb any security breach.

Covid - 19 and Counter-insurgency Operations in the Northeast

Prior to the pandemic, counter-insurgency operation against Boko Haram by the Government, has not satisfactorily restored peace. Pundits have blamed this on the heavy reliance on military dimension of operations, where it was noted that insurgency is hardly defeated by military operations alone. However, in spite of the increase in budget expenditure for security from USD 1.44 billion (about 4 trillion naira) allocated to the defense sector in 2009 (Iweze, 2020), to USD2.81 billion in 2018, yet, as at 2020, very little had been achieved in terms of ending the conflict. Military-led counter-insurgency operations in the North East still faces notable challenges (Onuoha, Nwangwu and Ikechukwu, 2020). This has resulted in security officials' mutiny, desertion from battle fronts and decline in fighter's morale. Thus, the group has remained active, growing in sophistication and increase in success rate. Iwere (2020), identified poor strategic planning, inadequate weapons and logistic supplies, poor welfare packages for personnel, allegation of corruption, poor security coordination and inadequate military operations as some of the factors contributing to the inability to effectively contain the menace of the group.

To complicate the already precarious security situation, Covid-19 struck with its attendant consequences including infectious spread, high causality rate, and economic depletion. The lock down and other preventive measures that was forced on nations, as well as a re-focus of attention from counter-insurgency to containment of the virus created gap in the management of Boko Haram induced crisis. The lockdown and other measures put in place to

contain the spread of the virus strengthened the activity and operations of the Boko Haram group. Attention was shifted from fighting Boko Haram to containing the spread of the virus through measures such as strict lockdown, avoidance of any sort of physical gathering and even scaling down medical services. One of the negative consequence of the enforcement of the lockdown in Nigeria was a noticeable re-direction of efforts from mounting robust internal security operations to a health emergency operation. While this was the case, Boko Haram insurgency in the North East and other criminal gangs in other parts of the country took advantage of the vulnerability to re-group. Hence, the shift from physical security to human security. Rather than deploying troops to the North East which, served as hub of the insurgent group; more actions were directed to preventing human physical contacts from social interactions in open spaces. Added to the new military duties is ensuring that medical equipment and supplies got to designated units at the expected time. Typically, attack on hard and soft targets increased, including attack on military formations, killing about 50 security forces in an ambush at Alagarno forest in Borno state (Iwere, 2020).

Similarly, in the event of emergency, certain human rights and freedom are set aside. To this end, some aspects of Nigeria's democratic practices were undermined while implementing measures to contain the spread of the virus. Accordingly, the outbreak of the virus disrupted humanitarian activities in the North East including peace building programmes that would have assisted the government to win the hearts and mind of the affected population. It again fueled geo-political tensions in the state and worsened civil unrests (Ossai, 2021). Ossai believes the virus was a multiplier effects to the already vulnerable situation of the country. As national and health security was important, counterinsurgency operations suffered a sort of neglect. In another perspective, the Covid-19 pandemic created an opportunity for peace in the country. This was because everything was at a kind of standstill.

Although the realities of Covid-19 became a major concern for the state, it had situational and relational dimensions to maintaining peace in Nigeria. In Nigeria, peace is a complex and multifaceted concept that is shaped by religion, politics, ethnicity, economic and other related spheres (Ossai, 2021). Owonikoko (2021) in his perspective explains that the Lake Chad region consist of fringe territories in Nigeria, Niger, Chad and Cameroon which are fragile and highly unstable. Effectiveness in counter-insurgency operation in this region became counter-productive in the face of the outbreak of Covid-19 pandemic. With the virus ravaging the world, and the fragile and highly unstable nature of the region, it became safe haven for Boko Haram and other criminal groups to build operational base in borders and countries of the region.

Weak government response in military counter terrorism operation, insufficient military personnel and the intensification of operations by the group aided the ineffective response to the insurgency. As a military security zone that depended largely on military operatives for stability, Covid-19 pandemic changed the wave of operations, as calculated and strategic attacks were orchestrated on security formations (Owonikoko, 2021). Related to this is Osah's and Adewunmi's (2020) argument that the security architecture of the Federal Government



of Nigeria in the period of Covid-19 pandemic was negatively affected. A strong connection was established to the security of the people in health-related matters and physical assurance of security in lives and properties.

Nexus between Health Insecurity and Internal Security Challenges

There is a thin line between health insecurity and national security threats. In recent years, national security of Nigeria has been largely threatened by a mirage of security challenges confronting the nation from different fronts. Monguno (2022) maintain that there is an internal security operation being mounted in almost all the states of the federation within the same period of time. This goes to show the severity of insecurity that manifest in different forms in Nigeria. For instance, there is Boko Haram terrorism operating in North East states, kidnaping for ransom in North West and other parts of the country, activities of ‘unknown gun men’ and secessionist agitation in the South East, oil piracy and bunkering in the South-South, kidnaping, ritual killing, internet fraud as well as armed banditry in the South-West among others. The escalation of Boko Haram terrorism in the northeast, beginning from 2009 changed the security landscape of the nation, with the introduction of what was hitherto uncommon including suicide bombing, mass killing, and kidnaping for ransom. While the government have battled to contain the threats posed by Boko Haram, other sources of insecurity grew in number and causality.

To corroborate this assertion, Monguno argued that the nation has been in its darkest moment owing to the increasing insecurity. He alluded that to address insecurity, military operations have been deployed to almost all the states of the federation. Although the Police is the lead agency in the maintenance of internal security, the magnitude of the threats has prompted the Government and the security actors to activate the Chapter 6 Section 217 Subsection (2) of the Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria, 1999 (as amended) to allow for the deployment of the Armed Forces of Nigeria as well as other sister security agencies to mount a holistic operation to counter the threats. Specifically, Sub section (2) of the constitution says: “The Federation shall, subject to an Act of the National Assembly made in that behalf, equip and maintain the armed forces as may be considered adequate and effective for the purpose of - (a) defending Nigeria from external aggression; (b) maintaining its territorial integrity and securing its borders from violation on land, sea, or air; (c) suppressing insurrection and acting in aid of civil authorities to restore order when called upon to do so by the President, but subject to such conditions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly; and (d) performance of such other functions as may be prescribed by an Act of the National Assembly” (Constitution of the FRN, 1999). In this regard, the involvement of the military and other security agencies in combating insecurity has the backing of the Constitution. However, even with the involvement of the Armed Forces, insecurity has remained a major challenge for the nation. Some scholars believe that tanks and boots is not

sufficient enough to address current challenges, since human security goes beyond maintenance of physical security.

Evidently, aside from physical injury, death, displacements and infrastructural collapse, insecurity has depleted the nation's national income thereby having a negative consequence on its development aspirations. While contending with that reality, Covid – 19 struck the world killing 6, 240,619 people between 2020 and May 2022, while there are about 511, 965,711 active cases globally (WHO, 2022). World Health Organisation (WHO) record shows the global break down of Covid active cases by region as follows: Europe 215,424,950, Americas 153,251,277, South-East Asia 57,882,962, Western Pacific 54,913,453, Eastern Mediterranean 21,702,163, and Africa 8,790,143. In Nigeria current record from the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC) indicate that Nigeria currently has 255,753 confirmed covid cases, out of which 2,699 are active, 249,911 were treated and discharged, while 3,143 people have died as a result of complications from Covid infections since 2020 (NCDC Report, 2022). This figure suggests that Africa and Nigeria in particular has a marginally low rate of covid infection and complications. This is contrary to what was anticipated base on the poor state of health system and weak economies of most African states. In Nigeria, this is complicated by insecurity, particularly, terrorism that have since 2009 drained substantial resources that would have been channeled to develop the health and other critical sectors.

As a desperate measure to contain the spread of the virus, the WHO encouraged nations to introduce strict restriction of large gathering of people, and in most cases, a total lockdown. For Nigeria, a nation with existing precarious security situation, Covid – 19 induced lockdown and desperation to contain the spread of the virus, diverted Government's attention from focusing on combatting physical insecurity to fighting health insecurity. As the Government battled to save lives of those affected or at least, prevent more people from getting infected, crimes and criminality increased. While the terrorists were re-strategizing and refocusing on a new approach, other criminal activities equally increased. For instance, there were recorded increase in cases of gender base violence such as rape, human rights abuse, robbery, looting and even kidnapping for ransom. While records of some of the cases were reported, greater number of similar cases of violent crimes were not reported and no actions taken to seek redress. This could be attributed to the rarity of security personnel dedicated to fighting insecurity within the period under review, as well as non-availability of personnel of other institutions such as the judiciary, police, ombudsman and others that would play one role or the other in administering justice and protecting human rights of the citizens.

Infrastructure, including health facilities have always been a priority of every government in Nigeria since independence, at least, in principle. With recorded improvement in many sectors such as agriculture, railways infrastructure, democratic consolidation, local content development, mining among others, health infrastructure remains grossly under-developed and inadequate to cater for a large population of over 200 million people. This implies that mortality rate maintains a record high when compared with nations with similar economic strength. With the advent of Covid – 19 following the first index case in March 2020, and as



expected, the existing health infrastructure could not absorb the health emergencies from Covid 19 and other health complications. Even with the Armed Forces whose primary role is maintaining security, it became distracted, delivering health services, humanitarian intervention as well as the enforcement of Covid – 19 restriction orders. In all of these, it could be deduced that counter-insurgency and other counter operations in the country have been largely successful, at least, in limiting the spheres of influence of adversaries to secluded locations, at the same time insurgency and other related security challenges such as kidnapping, activities of ‘unknown gun men’, internet fraud, ritual killings, kidnapping and systemic corruption have persisted. As nations are gradually lifting Covid – 19 restrictions, more security challenges are exacerbating, hence the imperative of technology in addressing them.

Imperative of Technology in Combating National Security Threats in Nigeria

As identified earlier in this paper, Nigeria is currently being faced with diverse security challenges that have threatened its corporate survival. Most of these challenges require a re-focus of approaches to successfully combat them. In the age of globalization, characterized with innovations, inventions and deployment of technology to solve the problems of the universe and its inhabitants, technology has daily been deployed for both positive and negative reasons. For instance, one of the greatest fears being entertained by state actors, regions and even international community is that of non-state armed actors and irregular forces taking hold of weapon of mass destructions (WMD) such as biological, chemical or even nuclear weapons capability. State actors, by nature are said to be rational, (although it is still subject of contention and interpretation) and subjects of international law. By implications, their actions are largely regulated by the dictates and conduct of national as well as international legal frameworks. This is contrary to non-state armed actors that mostly act irrationally by deploying violence to achieve their objectives.

Paradoxically, irregular forces have increasingly mastered the use of technology to drive down their message even when it involves mass murder and violation of citizens’ fundamental rights. With its capacity in media warfare, it could just be a matter of time before this palpable fear becomes real. Boko Haram and its splinter groups such as Islamic State in West Africa (ISWA) are effectively deploying technology, especially, the internet, in their operations. They use internet to recruit, train, sustain alliances, incite followers and sympathizers as well as communicate to the larger society,

With their nature and character, some of the existing world lethal weapons including chemical and biological weapons, if irrationally handled and deployed, of course, by armed groups, would spell doom for the world. Already the fourth-generation warfare has proven to be such that battle fronts have been eroded, while civilian objects are increasingly being targeted. Multiplicity of conflict actors are responsible for this. These actors target civilians and critical infrastructure using technologically driven weapons. Thus, in order to repel such

threats, they should be a dedicated training for personnel that would engage in counter warfare such as cyber operations. This is in addition to other non-military activities that are dedicated to winning the hearts and minds of the affected populace. Consequently, it is the position of this paper that in order to counter insurgency, and by extension, the fourth-generation warfare, deployment of technology is imperative. This could come in the form of investment in intelligence gathering infrastructure, deployment of high-tech equipment such as drones among others with high precision and less collateral damages. This will reduce the risk of physical deployment of troops and by extension limit casualty level.

Additionally, cyber security is now a top component of national security concerns. 21st century battle space has expanded to accord primacy to cyber warfare. Insurgents now seamlessly transmit information through the use of cyber space. Where there is problem of insurgency like Boko Haram in the North East Nigeria, there is usually the added fear of cyber-attack or hacking of security soft and hardware to immobilize its infrastructure in order to destabilize the enemy. This could pose a major threat to national security. Media have aided Boko Haram to receive or anticipate the nature of response from security forces and use such information to either engage the military and desolve within the populace, making it difficult for a successful counter operations and possible containment of the adversaries over the years. Government needs to effectively engage the media to counter the Boko Haram narratives. Engaging in media warfare, while in the longer term, deploy high tech military technology against them, would change the pace of the operation.

Similarly, with the coming of Ebola virus in 2015 and Covid – 19 pandemics in 2020 to Nigeria, and most likely there would still be an outbreak of more infectious diseases of international concern in the near future. Government needs to think along the use of technology in containing the spread of such diseases that are likely to pose or add to the security concern of the nation, as well as integrate such measure into policies and programmes that deal with the national security question. The inter-connectedness of health security with other elements of national security cannot be completely ignored, especially as all of these form part of human security which has been the focus of international community in the recent time. Human security involves freedom from hunger, diseases, poverty, feeling of insecurity and even guarantee and protection of rights, liberty and other privileges. Where there is no human security, the question of national security cannot be attained, it is therefore imperative to deploy technology to prevent the outbreak of diseases or, at least contain its spread to avoid the human casualty and economic consequences of it. This is most important, in a space and time where insecurity has significantly drained the nation's economic resources and caused serious fatalities in terms of number of people killed and displaced. It has equally disintegrated the political system because at the root of insecurity are critical unresolved political issues.

Major Findings

Arising from the discussion and analysis presented in this here, this paper submits as follows:

1. The paper established that there is a nexus between health insecurity (human security) and internal security challenges (physical security). - Evidently, aside from physical injury, death, displacements and infrastructural collapse, insecurity has depleted the nation's national income thereby having a negative consequence on its development aspirations, including building health infrastructure to manage health emergencies such as Covid – 19.
2. Over the years, Nigeria has made significant development strides, particularly, in the agricultural sector, railways infrastructure, democratic consolidation, local content development, mining among others, health infrastructure remains grossly under-developed.
3. Nigeria's internal security operations mounted to counter increasing insecurity in many parts of the country have been largely kinetic. However, inclusion on non-kinetic approaches, and particularly, the application of technology in combatting internal security threats would be far more effective than heavy reliance on deploying boots on the ground.
4. Humanitarian consequences of insecurity transcends beyond basic needs of victims to include health security, hence the need to factor health emergency needs in any conflict management approach of the government.
5. The intervention of the Armed Forces of Nigeria in the enforcement of covid - 19 restrictions, as well as humanitarian support during the covid era caused a disruption in their primary responsibility of safe guiding lives and property, especially, in a country that is faced with multiple threats from different fronts.
6. As nations are lifting Covid – 19 restrictions, more security challenges are most likely going to spring up in Nigeria, hence, the imperative of technology in addressing them. Technology enhanced security governance is imperative in addressing insecurity most especially counter insurgency when dealing with health emergencies like COVID 19.
7. Technology driven defence and security mandates improves intelligence operations most especially during health emergencies.
8. The security agencies involved in counterinsurgency operations must ensure effective collaboration, coordination and cooperation during health and humanitarian emergencies which can be enhanced by leveraging on technology.
9. Gender considerations in combating insecurity and health emergencies are essential for operational efficiency.
10. It is imperative to maintain inter-agency capacity building for planning and response to complex emergencies like COVID 19 for internal security operations.

Conclusion

The application of technology remains imperative in countering threats posed by Boko Haram insurgency as well as other security concerns. The need for deployment of technology in the management of both physical and health security concerns is made more pronounced following the recent outbreak of COVID - 19 pandemic and other related infectious diseases such as Ebola virus that affected many countries of West Africa. The outbreak of COVID - 19 and its rapid spread all over the world presents a new reality that the world would have to live with. Nigeria, having been battling with insecurity that manifest in terrorism, kidnapping for ransom, ethno religious tension, secessionist agitation, oil piracy, armed robbery among other criminal enterprises, was taken aback when health emergency of global concern struck and exposed her vulnerability and unpreparedness to manage such emergency, especially, in an already fragile state. In this context, deployment of technology such as drones, cyber space and investment in intelligence warfare would help in combatting insecurity, particularly, in a period of health pandemic. Similarly, technologically driven health infrastructure is imperative in the preparation and management of health emergency.

Accordingly, the paper established that there is a nexus between health insecurity and internal security challenges, while acknowledging the significant development strides made by the Government of Nigeria over the years particularly, in key sectors of the economy. In all of this, health infrastructural development remains grossly under-developed. It identified that over reliance on kinetic approach to countering insecurity has not yielded the needed result, hence the need for a whole of society approach. It further proposed the need to factor health emergency needs in any conflict management approach of the government.

Way Forward

In the light of the above, this paper recommends as follows:

- a) Nigerian State as well as countries with similar security challenges and response measure should re-focus their counter threats approaches and deploy a combination of kinetic and non-kinetic operation in countering insecurity. This will include the application of technology in fighting both internal security threats and health insecurity. States' actions are largely regulated by the dictates and conduct of international legal frameworks. Therefore, state actors could be trusted with the deployment of both technologies for warfare and for health emergencies.
- b) State actors should retain the monopoly of media and cyber space in order to counter the terrorists' narratives. Irregular forces have increasingly mastered the use of cyber space to drive down their message even when it involves mass murder and violation of citizens' rights. With its capacity in media warfare, BH has been launching a psychological warfare. Hence, the need to counter such narrative.



- c) With the dynamics and changing nature of conflict and warfare, Nigerian Government, regional and international community should encourage, develop and continually conduct dedicated and specialized training for personnel involve in conflict management and human and health security for enhanced counter operations. This is in addition to other non-military activities that are dedicated to winning the hearts and minds of the local populace
- d) Nigeria government should maintain a dedicated fund for upgrading of counter operation equipment and infrastructure. This could come in the form of investment in intelligence gathering infrastructure, deployment of high tech equipment such as drones among others with high precision and less collateral effect. This will reduce the risk of putting boots on ground and limit casualty level.
- e) Government of Nigeria need to think along the use of technology in containing the spread of such diseases that is of security concern to the nation, as well as integrate such measure into policies and programmes that deal with national security question. The inter-connectedness of health security with other elements of national security cannot be completely ignored, especially as all of these form part of human security which has been the focus of international community in the recent time.

Conflict of Interest

The authors hereby declare that no competing financial interest exists for this manuscript.

Notes on Contributors

Aishatu Morido Yanet is a Research Fellow in the Department of Conflict, Peacekeeping and Humanitarian Studies, Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, at the National Defence College in Abuja, Nigeria. Since 2008, she supports the institution in implementing its mandate as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Training Centre of Excellence (TCE) for Peace Support Operations at the Strategic level. In that capacity she has coordinated and facilitated several peace support operations programmes and activities. She has attended several professional courses and exercises, nationally and internationally in her fields of interest and expertise which are, Peace Support Operations, Security and Gender. Additionally, she is involved in individual and collaborative research, curriculum design and development as well as planning and programming. She is currently a doctoral candidate at the Nigerian Defence Academy Kaduna.

Ugwumba EGBUTA is a Research Fellow at the Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College Abuja Nigeria. He is a trainer and facilitator. He coordinates Protection of Civilians/ Child Protection and Humanitarian activities in his Institution. He was the Coordinator for the Government of Japan funded project on Strengthening National and Regional Capacities for Peace Support Operations. He has broad research experience with special interest in foreign policy analysis, child protection, conflict management, organize crime, humanitarian intervention and gender in conflict. Egbuta is majoring in conflict management and comparative politics in his Doctorate studies. He has participated in several local and international trainings, workshops and conferences including: AU Training of Trainers Course on African Standby Force Civilian Foundation Course, Ghana; Training of Trainers on Training Design and Development, Abuja; High Level Course on Civil-Police-Military Relations in Peace Support Operations, Vicenza, Italy; Training of Trainers Course for Gender Instructors

in Peace and Security Ecosystem, Ghana; Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) Course (UNICEF); African Standby Force Foundation Course for Peace Support Operations Zimbabwe; Pilot Training of Trainer course on Child Protection in Armed Conflict, Rwanda; Integrated Mission Planning and Mission Support Training, Zimbabwe; Civilian Peacekeepers Foundation Course Curriculum Development, Kenya; among others. He is a reviewer of several international journals. He has published widely in both local and international outlets. He is a member of several professional bodies including: Nigerian Political Science Association (NPSA); Mediation Training Institute (NTI); and Nigerian Institute of Management, (Chartered). Egbuta has received several awards for hard work and dedication to service. He was the overall winner of the Centre for Strategic Research and Studies, National Defence College Academic Excellence Award for best research paper 2020/2021.

Oluwatunmise Taiwo Paimo is a young female visiting fellow to the Department of Economic History and International Relations, Stockholm University. Presently, she is undergoing a PhD programme in the Department of International Relations, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile-Ife, Nigeria; where she holds a Master of Science and Bachelor of Science Degree Honors in the same field of study. Her research addresses issues relating to development, gender, conflict, insurgency and foreign policy in Africa, particularly Nigeria. She is an Assistant Lecturer at the Department of Political Science and International Studies, Crescent University, Abeokuta, Ogun State, Nigeria. Oluwatunmise is a proficient writer, an excellent team player, an efficient communicator, and has good interpersonal relationship skills.

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